

<http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Public-Works/Purchasing-and-Bidding/Purchasing-and-Bidding-for-Washington-State-Local/Personal-Services-Contracts.aspx>

Soliciting Proposals

Local governments generally have significant flexibility in determining how to solicit competition. However, if the project includes grant funding, the grant conditions may require a specific solicitation process. Generally, the more complex or expensive the project is anticipated to be, the more rigorous the solicitation process should be.

Suggested Bid Limits and Processes

MRSC suggests that small- and medium-sized agencies use the following dollar limits and processes for personal services. However, the exact limits and processes should be tailored to each particular agency. Agencies should always document these processes for the public record, including the selection criteria, the names of firms considered, all responses received, the basis for the award decision, and a copy of the final contract.

Formal Competitive Bidding

- Suggested for all contracts over \$20,000.
- Prepare a formal solicitation document such as a Request for Proposals or a Request for Qualifications. Describe all the project requirements in order for proposers to understand what the agency needs and how the responses will be evaluated.
- Publish legal notice in major daily newspapers to notify firms of the upcoming solicitation. Develop a mailing list of all firms responding to the solicitation.
- Post the solicitation document on the agency website (optional).
- Develop score sheets to be used by evaluators.
- Send the solicitation document to at least six firms, or notify at least six firms that the document is available at the agency website. If less than six firms are contacted, document the reasons.
- Conduct a pre-proposal conference, if required, and provide answers to bidders' questions via addenda.
- Require sealed bids and a public bid opening. Date- and time-stamp all proposals received.
- Evaluate proposals according to the score sheets, using at least three evaluators. Interview the top finalists, if desired.
- Negotiate a contract with the lowest responsible bidder.